

Message Text

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42

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-02 HEW-02 ACDA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00 DPW-01 OPR-02

A-01 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 IO-10 AID-05 /094 W

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P R 161123Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2839

INFO AMCONSUL UDORN

7TH RRFs UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6574

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, TH

SUBJ: RAMASUN GATE INCIDENT

SUMMARY. SOME 15 TO 20 STUDENTS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS DEMONSTRATED AT THE EMBASSY APRIL 15. THEIR QUESTIONS OF AN EMBASSY OFFICER CENTERED ON AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE USG AND RTG ON BASES IN THAILAND, THE LUECHAI INCIDENT AT RAMASUN STATION NEAR UDORN, AND DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. THEY WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE GENERALLY NONCOMMITTAL RESPONSES. THE PRESS GAVE AMPLE COVERAGE TO THE EVENT AND WE EXPECT UNFLATTERING ARTICLES APRIL 16. THE DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY ISSUE TOUCHES THE SENSITIVITIES OF MANY THAI, AND THE LUECHAI CASE COULD PROVOKE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES FOR US. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME 15 TO 20 PERSONS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS STUDENTS FROM SINAKHARIN THARAWIROT UNIVERSITY (A FEDERATION OF TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES), THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND, AND THE POWER PARTY (PAK PALANG) ARRIVED AT THE EMBASSY THE MORNING OF APRIL 15. EIGHT TO TEN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS REPORTERS PRECEDED THEM. THE STUDENTS HUNG APPROXIMATELY

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20 SIGNS ON THE OUTSIDE GATES OF THE EMBASSY COMPOUND

PROTESTING THE RAMASUN INCIDENT. WHEN THEY REQUESTED TO MEET WITH AN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR WENT OUTSIDE TO TALK WITH THEM.

2. THE STUDENTS HAD TWO SPOKESMEN, PRINYA KUANHUN AND MONTHIEN YUNDAENG. THEY ASKED ABOUT THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE USG AND THE RTG ON MILITARY BASES IN THAILAND. THEY STATED THEY HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED THIS ISSUE WITH MR. PRACHA KUNAKASEM OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THE PREVIOUS DAY. THEY SAID THAT PRACHA HAD TOLD THEM THAT THE FORMER GOVERNMENT LEADERS OF THAILAND HAD VERBALLY AGREED TO THE U.S. PRESENCE, AND THAT THERE WAS NO FORMAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT. THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS SUCH A CONTRACT, AND IF THERE WAS NOT SUCH A CONTRACT DID IT MEAN THAT THE AMERICAN MILITARY BASES COULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THAILAND IMMEDIATELY. THE REPLY WAS THAT WHILE THERE WAS NO STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, THAT THE STUDENTS SHOULD ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE RTG ABOUT AGREEMENTS ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE ITSELF.

3. THE STUDENTS BROUGHT UP THE CASE OF THE FOUR AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL AT RAMASUN STATION NEAR UDORN WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT WITH MR. LUECHAI JITPAKDEE. THE STUDENTS WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BANGKOK WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MATTER, WHICH RESULTED IN THE THAI POLICE BEING REQUESTED TO REMOVE THEIR WEAPONS PRIOR TO BEING ALLOWED ENTRY TO THE BASE AND HAVING BEEN INSULTED. THE STUDENTS WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE FOUR WOULD APPEAR IN THAI COURT AND BE SUBJECT TO THAI LAW. THEY ALSO WANTED TO KNOW WHERE THE FOUR U.S. PERSONNEL WERE PRESENTLY LOCATED AND WHY THEY WERE NOT IN UDORN. ACTING ON INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE, THE REPLY WAS ONLY THAT THE FOUR WERE CURRENTLY AT UTAPAO.

4. THE STUDENTS ASKED IF THEY JOINED FORCES AND GATHERED OUTSIDE THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WHETHER SUCH AN ACTION WOULD CAUSE THE AMERICAN MILITARY TO LEAVE THAILAND OR WHETHER THE AMERICANS WOULD SHOOT THEM. THE REPLY WAS THAT WE WOULD NOT RESPOND TO MOB PROTEST, BUT CERTAINLY TO AN RTG CONFIDENTIAL

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INVITATION FOR OUR FORCES TO LEAVE THAILAND.

5. THE STUDENTS QUESTIONED THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF IMMUNITY. THEY ASKED WHAT WE HAD DONE TO REMEDY LUECHAI'S CASE. THE REPLY WAS THAT THE CONSUL IN UDORN HAD ISSUED AN APOLOGY. THE STUDENTS INDICATED THIS RESPONSE WAS INADEQUATE AND ASKED IF AMERICANS CONTINUED TO ASSAULT THAIS, WHAT WOULD THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND WHAT WOULD THE AMERICAN

EMBASSY DO? WOULD THE ASSAILANTS GO UNPUNISHED AS IN THE PRESENT CASE? THEY REPLY WAS THAT WE WOULD NOT DISCUSS HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS.

6. THE STUDENTS COMPLAINED THAT IN GENERAL THE ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTIONS WAS TO REFER THEM TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT. THEY STATED THAT IF THEY DID NOT RECEIVE SOME SATISFACTION, THEY WOULD COME BACK TO PROTEST FURTHER. THEY WANTED BEFORE LEAVING, HOWEVER, TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS AS THAI PEOPLE REGARDING REAL FREEDOM, WHICH IS WHAT THEY ARE SEEKING IN THE SAME MANNER AS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE SEEK FULL FREEDOM. THEY WISHED THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR TO TRANSMIT THIS EXPRESSION OF THEIR DESIRES TO THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ON THE BEHALF OF THE THAI PEOPLE, AND HOPED THAT THE THAI PEOPLE AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE COULD COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THEIR MUTUAL DESIRE FOR FREEDOM.

7. COMMENT. THE THAI PRESS WAS ON HAND DURING THESE EXCHANGES AND TOOK MANY PHOTOGRAPHS. WE EXPECT THAT THE VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS WILL ROAST US APRIL 16 FOR THE LACK OF FORTHCOMING REPLIES, AND FOR THE WIDER ISSUE OF ALLEGED INFRINGEMENT OF SOVEREIGNTY.

8. THE PROTESTORS WERE ORDERLY AND REASONABLY POLITE. AT LEAST SOME OF THEM FELT QUITE STRONGLY THAT OUR ACTIONS AT RAMASUN HAD TRAMPLED THAI SOVEREIGNTY. THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS SENTIMENT. WE HAVE HEARD HIGH RANKING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR OFFICIALS COMPLAIN THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FOR AMERICAN SERVICEMEN IN THAILAND AT ALL. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS PARTICULAR GROUP OF DEMONSTRATORS HAS A WIDE FOLLOWING, BUT THE OBFUSCATING RTG RESPONSES OF APRIL 14, ALONG WITH OUR OWN LESS THAN CANDID STAND COULD STIMULATE FURTHER PROTESTS, PARTICULARLY

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ON THE ISSUE OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY. WE ARE REVIEWING THE RAMASUN INCIDENT TO FIND ADDITIONAL WAYS TO REDUCE THE HEAT. MASTERS

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